

First record of Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* in the Southern Hemisphere

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According to the literature (e.g. Cramp & Simmons 1977, Nelson 1978, Carboneras *et al.* 2016), Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* breeds on both sides of the North Atlantic Ocean, between 48°N and 72°N on the east side, reaching north to Norway, whereas in the west it nests only between 46°N and 50°N. Carboneras *et al.* (2016) noted that winter movements regularly reach as far south as Mauritania and Senegal (including birds breeding in Canada), exceptionally Guinea-Bissau (Borrow & Demey 2001), as well as entering the Mediterranean via the Strait of Gibraltar east to Israel and Turkey, and in the western Atlantic south to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. In the Caribbean Basin, there are records from the Bahamas (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), Cuba (Fox & Fox 2007) and Trinidad & Tobago (Kenefick 2010).

On 13 February 2016, during field work at the border of the municipalities of Fortim and Beberibe, in Ceará, north-east Brazil (04°22'56"S, 37°50'50"W), RSCT found an adult Northern Gannet on the rio Pirangi, very close to its mouth. The bird was floating c.20 m from RSCT but then flew away, preventing very good photographs, although those obtained are sufficient to identify the species (Fig. 1). In one image (Fig. 2) it is possible to see some palms in the background that we tentatively identified as *Copernicia prunifera* (Mill.) known in the region as 'Carnaúba'; this, together with the GPS stamp on the images (seen by our referees), validate the record.

The wing pattern visible in Fig. 2, with all-white secondaries and black wingtip feathers (primaries and their coverts) being diagnostic. Together with the buff head and white body and tail, these characters make the bird's identification unequivocal. Unsurprisingly,



Figure 1. Head and wing of Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*, rio Pirangi, Ceará, Brazil, February 2016, showing the diagnostic wing pattern (Régis Siqueira de Castro Teixeira)



Figure 2. Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*, rio Pirangi, Ceará, Brazil, February 2016, showing the diagnostic white rectrices, with 'Carnaúba' palms *Copernicia prunifera* in the background (Régis Siqueira de Castro Teixeira)

this record was made during the Southern Hemisphere summer, i.e. during the Northern Hemisphere winter, when the species is known to move south.

Records like this are presumably very rare. The fact that the species is unexpected in the region, its resemblance to other species such as Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* and Cape Gannet *Morus capensis*, and its absence from the better-known guides to South American birds (e.g. Murphy 1936, Ridgely & Greenfield 2001, Restall *et al.* 2006), could also explain the lack of previous records for mainland South America.

Other Sulidae previously recorded in Brazil are: *Morus capensis*, Australasian Gannet *M. serrator*, Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*, *S. sula* and Brown Booby *S. leucogaster* (Piacentini *et al.* 2015).

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